

Living on Borrowed Time

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten, Or even by reason of strength fourscore years; Yet is their pride but labor and sorrow; For it is soon gone, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10). Having reached that milestone of threescore and ten a few years ago. I feel that it is by the grace of God, the skill of doctors, and a wife who looks after my health that I am still in good health and among the living. At this stage of life, one has a different perspective on the past, and on what lies ahead. In a sense, those who are living past a certain age are living on "borrowed time."

We have all borrowed things from others from time to time. We may borrow some clothes for a special occasion, or borrow some dinnerware if we are having a crowd over for dinner. And there are times when we might borrow someone's car when ours is sick or dead. When we borrow things, we generally take extra care of them, knowing they are not ours, and we will have to give an account if we damage the things borrowed.

How do we regard our borrowed time? In truth, all of our time is borrowed, as we owe our time to the Lord, whether we are young or old. This is particularly true of those who are Christians, because we have been bought with the blood of Christ, and we belong to God. "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Paul evidently considered that everything he was and had belonged to the Lord. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."

In view of the brevity and uncertainty of life, we are admonished to be "making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

In my search of the Scriptures, I have not found the pas-

sage that speaks of the Christian's "retirement years," other than the heavenly rest. I have seen too many older saints who "take life easy," because they have already done their duty. When I see someone like that, I suspect that they have been taking things pretty easy all along the way, for one who is fervently serving the Lord in youth is not apt to let the fires cool when they are older. Because of persecutions and hardships, evidently Jeremiah had determined not to prophesy any longer, but found he could not contain himself. "And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain" (Jeremiah 20:9).

What can older Christians do, who often have spare time on their hands? Consider a few suggestions. (1) They can encourage those who are younger, who may be struggling. A few words of encouragement or wise counsel can do wonders. (2) They can work with Bible Correspondence Courses. Some are doing this on-line, as well as through the mail. (3) They can teach the gospel. I have known more than one elderly saint who was teaching others, even into their 90s. (4) You can write letters of encouragement to those who are preaching the gospel in other places, especially those whom the church where you attend are supporting. (5) You can teach skills to those who are younger, as mentioned in Titus 2:4-5. (6) Visit or call those who were absent from the assembly. (7) Perhaps by reason of infirmity, many of these things are beyond your ability, but there is still an effective work you can do—pray for others. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (Eph 5:16).

If you are living on borrowed time, use it carefully, so that you can give it back in good shape.

Jefferson David Tant

Light In The Lord | Eph 5:8-10

Patrick Farish

"...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true) and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord."

Having urged the Ephesians to "not become partners" with those he identifies as "darkness," he urges them, as "light in the Lord," to walk as children of light. There are different descriptions of the walk of a Christian – as, "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:10). Now, we will look at the task – indeed, the requirement -- of discernment.

To "discern" is to determine a conclusion from available facts. Sometimes new converts to the study of the Bible, or people like those in Hebrews 5:12-13 want to know where some activity, or practice, is authorized, or prohibited – "where does it say have a church building?" --- or, "where does it say, don't gamble; or, don't drink booze; or, don't eat the Lord's supper on Thursday?"

As far as a "church building" is concerned, a requirement to assemble (Hebrews 10:25) necessitates a place – whether it be a building built for that purpose, or someone's home. Whatever is most advantageous to those involved is authorized; not named, but discerned as authorized. God said have a place to assemble when He said assemble.

Another wants to know, where does it say "don't gamble?" Gambling involves putting something of value at risk in a game of chance, for the purpose of taking the valuables of another. Several passages have good application here – but we cite just one, in Matthew 7:12, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets." What does the gambler wish that others would do to him? Then, that's the thing he should do to them. The word "gambler" is not there – but the principle is, easily discerned by the student.

Then, drinking intoxicants – does the Bible say, "don't"? Well, not in so many words; but the requirement to not "get drunk with wine" comes close to being an outright prohibition. The one who would not be

drunken – cannot be drunken, without taking the first drink!

Finally, the Lord's Supper on Thursday – or Friday, or whenever. The first day of the week, the Lord's day, is prominent in the New Testament. It was the day of the resurrection of Jesus (John 20:1), of Eutychus (Acts 20:7-9), the day designated for contribution by the saints (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and the Lord's Day, the day John was charged to write (Revelation 1:10-11).

In none of those passages, however, is the first day of the week, the Lord's day, named as the day of eating the Lord's Supper. So maybe Thursday is alright, hmmm? No, the only time the Lord's Supper is associated with any specific day, is in Acts 20:7, 11, "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight ... And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed."

The first day of the week was the day when the early Christians gathered to eat the Lord's Supper, and that is what they did. They did this in the company of an apostle, and evidently this was the apostolic practice. Verse seven records their eating the Lord's Supper – "we were gathered to break bread." In verse eleven Paul "had broken bread and eaten," in preparation for traveling on foot. They all ate the Lord's Supper; only Paul ate the common meal preparatory to his departure.

Well, does that exclude Thursday? Only the Lord's day is mentioned. Writing to the Corinthians Paul said " ... that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written ..." (1 Corinthians 4:6). If we walk as "children of light," our lives will bear fruit that is good and right and true.



Read your Bible daily